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Behavioral Indicators of Drug Couriers in Airports

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13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ¹ Kiernan Group Holdings, 1201 1st Street North, Unit 504, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250 ² Reallaer Inc., 6710 Oxon Hill Road, Oxon Hill, MD 20745					
14. ABSTRACT Law enforcement practitioners rely on a variety of behaviors to identify drug couriers in airports. Through consultation with subject matter experts, we cataloged 69 distinct behaviors. These behaviors relate to ticket characteristics, luggage characteristics, general behaviors, deceptive behaviors, verbal behaviors, nonverbal behaviors, and group behaviors. These 69 behaviors are used within specific environments to understand the importance of an individual's behavior. There are five pre-departure environments relevant to the use of these behaviors: pre-arrival, drop-off, ticket counter, security lane, and departure gate/terminal; and three post-arrival environments: arrival gate/terminal, baggage claim, and pickup. Further research is needed to identify the reliability and validity of the findings documented in this report.					
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PREFACE

Today's military commander recognizes the value of personnel in theater with experience in law enforcement gained from constant interaction with individuals who deceive, defraud, intimidate, and coerce. These personnel build an expertise in discerning the methods used to hide contraband in plain sight and witness the changing tactics, techniques, and procedures used by criminals. This is a lifesaving skill set and once documented, standardized, and validated, can be transitioned to others. Although not a common term in the accepted warfighting lexicon, the idea of discerning "What Just Doesn't Look Right" (JDLR) is an essential survival skill. Operationalizing JDLR, especially within and across cultures, can augment the curriculum being taught to military and law enforcement personnel by documenting and then transferring the essential knowledge employed by those pursuing criminals or insurgents.

A multi-phase project ongoing since 2010, the purpose of the JDLR Project is to identify and articulate indicators of behavior associated with deceit, threat, fear of detection, or the carrying of some form of contraband. Under JDLR, we are documenting these indicators of suspicious behavior based on the extent that a specific person of interest (like someone carrying a firearm) is aware of and interacting with a perceived threat (such as the presence of law enforcement).

The JDLR project has enabled us to identify specific behaviors law enforcement personnel look for, how these behaviors are used in their decision making process, and when these behaviors are perceived to be relevant. This research was derived from the knowledge and experience of police officers employed throughout the United States.

The project team includes law enforcement personnel with extensive experience with the subject matter at both the policy and operational level. Our team identified a number of behavioral indicators on which police officers routinely rely to interpret behavior and established standardized terminology for these behaviors. We also documented how and why police officers make decisions during an interdiction and the types of observations, assessments, and predictions they routinely make. This project facilitates both the transfer of knowledge to inexperienced personnel and serves as an impetus for expanding research to assess the reliability and validity of behavioral indicators of deceit, threat, fear of detection, and the carrying of contraband.

Each phase of the project is described independently below.

JDLR PHASE I

The primary goal of Phase I was the identification of behavioral indicators of deceit, threats, fear of detection, or the carrying of some form of contraband. Available research and documentation on these behavioral indicators is limited. It either focuses on simply articulating specific behaviors or describing various aspects of body language. In Phase I, we focused our efforts on documenting the behaviors indicating that a subject is carrying a handgun or illegal narcotics. We focused our operationalization of suspicious behavior on how an individual carrying these specific items of contraband behave when they are unobserved by a law enforcement (operating in their natural environment), how they behave when law

enforcement or a police patrol is present but not watching them, how they behave when that patrol is watching them, and how they behave when initially approached by that patrol.

The findings of Phase I was documented in three reports. These reports include:

- 1) Behavioral Indicators of Illegal and Legal Gun Carrying;
- 2) Behavioral Indicators of Drug Carrying in Open Spaces; and
- 3) Behavioral Indicators of Drug Couriers in Airports.

These reports provide a foundation for our understanding of specific behaviors associated with threat, deceit, fear of detection, and the carrying of contraband.

JDLR PHASE II

The primary goal of Phase II was to identify how behavioral indicators are used during the course of the interplay between a person of interest and the police. The project ventured to understand how police interpret, process, and react to human behavior. Unlike in Phase I, we did not focus solely on persons carrying firearms or drugs because there are jurisdiction-specific legal and use-of-force elements which dictate the dynamics of those encounters. Instead, we concentrated on encounters where the exact motivator of the suspicious behavior was unknown. Focusing on the unknown was necessary because a person may be acting suspiciously for a variety of reasons: they may be in possession of a firearm or illegal drugs, engaged in a criminal act, be wanted by police, have negative attitudes towards law enforcement, or simply be anxious. It is up to the police to make this determination.

To better understand how police use behavioral indicators we conducted a Field Training Officer Interdiction Seminar in October 2013. We invited teams of police officers from throughout the country. The officers participated in a role-playing scenario with experienced police trainers and were subsequently debriefed regarding what they saw and how they made decisions. We learned how the participating officers interpreted the behaviors being exhibited in order to determine their course of action. This effort included the development of a Universal Interdiction Framework (UIF) to both teach and assess the usage of behavioral indicators during an encounter

In Phase II, we also studied how law enforcement personnel develop a baseline of normal behavior in a given environment. The baseline is used to identify behavioral deviations. To understand baselining and ensure the applicability of project research to military personnel operating in a wide variety of environments we conducted a Cultural Translation Seminar in March, 2014. The combined research in both baselining and cultural translation of behaviors indicated the tremendous variation in norms of behavior from one location to another. Based on these findings, we determined there was a need to develop a system or process which operational personnel can utilize to determine the baseline in a variety of contexts and cultural settings.

The findings of Phase II were documented in two reports. These reports include:

1. Behavioral Indicators During a Police Interdiction; and
2. Developing a Culturally Neutral Context Specific Baselining Process.

These reports, in combination with the research conducted in JDLR Phase I, provide a basis for understanding when, why, and how behavioral indicators are used to identify threats, deceit, people carrying contraband, or individuals trying to avoid detection. This research, although preliminary, is tied to police officers decisions to detain, search, use force, or make an arrest. The JDLR Project created a foundation to develop training for law enforcement and security personnel to utilize behavioral indicators in a safe, legal, and effective manner. Training police and security personnel to interpret and properly react to the behavior of those with whom they are interacting will better prepare them to complete their mission and keep themselves and their compatriots safe.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the United States, airports are a prominent part of our transportation network. Long distance travel within and outside the country is made possible by airplanes and airports. The use of air transport is ubiquitous among both legitimate business community and illegitimate businesses such as the illegal drug trade.

Individuals traveling by air, or any large group of people encountering an identical situation, tend to act in similar ways. People traveling by air have similar goals, similar obstacles to overcome, and are likely to have similar reactions to the airport environment. By understanding the context of that environment and what behaviors are expected, behaviors that deviate from the norm can be identified and used to identify individuals who might be involved in illicit activity. One area where this deviant behavior can be used is to facilitate the identification of people transporting illegal drugs. Experienced law enforcement officers have identified a number of behaviors which can be used to identify these individuals. Although behaviors help to identify potential couriers, it is important to note that a single behavior is not an indicator of wrongdoing. Behaviors, when viewed cumulatively, can indicate a person who requires closer inspection by law enforcement.

In the summer of 2012, a team of researchers from the Adversarial Modeling and Exploitation Office (AMX) at the Naval Research Laboratory attended a training class and a roundtable discussion with trainers from the International Narcotics Interdiction Association (INIA.) The purpose of the training and the discussion was to identify behaviors typical of drug couriers.

Based on this training and the roundtable, AMX researchers cataloged 69 distinct behaviors in 7 categories. These characteristics include ticket characteristics, luggage characteristics, general behaviors, deceptive behaviors, verbal behaviors, nonverbal behaviors, and group behaviors. Since not all couriers exhibit all behaviors, the individual's behavior and the location in which the behavior is occurring are extremely important. To understand the importance of an individual's behavior in a specific environment, we identified the various environments in an airport. There are five pre-departure environments: pre-arrival, drop-off, ticket counter, security lane, and departure gate/terminal; and three post-arrival environments: arrival gate/terminal, baggage claim, and pickup. These segments are essentially the different sub-environments in which law enforcement officers or security personnel might interact with an individual. Developing an understanding of the unique context of the airport environment, and the sub-environments, are essential to interpreting behavior and the use of behavioral cues to identify drug couriers.

The identification and classification of these behaviors may allow for more reliable identification of couriers, but the behaviors identified are yet to be evaluated empirically to determine their validity.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF DRUG COURIERS AT AIRPORTS

INTRODUCTION

Airports have a unique place in our society. They allow millions of people to move throughout the world on a daily basis. Regretfully, they do not only facilitate the movement of the law abiding public but also the movement of members and goods associated with organized criminal groups. This is especially true in the case of the illegal narcotics trade, where drug couriers use airports to transport drugs and money throughout the United States.

While there are certain characteristics of air travel which facilitate the movement of drugs and money, these same characteristics can also enable the identification of drug couriers. There is a cadre of law enforcement organizations that have units focused on drug interdiction at airports. Experienced personnel in these organizations have identified a number of characteristics, ranging from ticket reservation information to verbal and non-verbal behaviors, which have been successful in helping to identify drug couriers and assisting in their interdiction.

This report documents a training class that was provided by the International Narcotics Interdiction Association (INIA) to a team of researchers at the Adversarial Modeling and Exploitation Office, US Naval Research Lab on July 19th, 2012 and a Roundtable Discussion with the INIA Trainers on July 20th, 2012 in Alexandria, VA. This report was subsequently vetted by these INIA Trainers.

This report seeks to not only identify relevant behaviors, but also why and when they occur, thereby allowing for transferability to other settings. Airports are also a unique environment and within this report we seek to capture the uniqueness of this environment and the potential applicability of this information to airport related security problems. Behaviors identified in this report are potentially applicable to other types of illegal activities in a variety of environments. They may point to a person who is involved in some sort of other illegal activity and it is the responsibility of the interdicting officer to determine the nature of the illegal activity.

Utilization of behavioral indicators to identify a drug courier is not necessarily a straightforward process. It requires an understanding of an individual's behavior and his environment. Additionally, there is no single behavior to identify a drug courier; rather, these behaviors are cumulative. Used in combination, behavioral indicators offer the opportunity to understand why an individual is acting in a particular way and, if needed, to facilitate interdiction.

The remainder of this document is divided into five sections:

1. Background - Provides background to this project and background information on drug couriers.
2. Behaviors - Describes the various behaviors identified by the INIA in the training class.
3. Sequence of Events - Describes the sequence of events and the different areas of the airport that a courier will pass through in the process of transporting drugs or money in an airport setting.
4. Conclusions – Includes input on applicability to other settings and recommendation for systematic assessment.

BACKGROUND

Drug couriers and airports create a unique operating environment for law enforcement. The purpose of this section is to provide some context to drug couriers, airports, and the legalities of interdiction in airports.

The Drug Courier

Drug organizations move drugs and money by air for a number of reasons. First, highway, bus and train, and mail interdiction are improving and making it more risky to move drugs by these methods. Second, air travel is quick, so there is less time for apprehension. Third, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has a focus on passenger and airline security, and as such, not drug interdiction (INIA, 2012). Lastly, flying is the most simplistic and non-threatening mode of transport. It does not require a credit card, reservations can be made at the last minute, false identification can go undetected, and there is a possibility of leaving the airport while on a layover at another airport to avoid detection.

INIA trainers indicate that there is not a standard physical description specific to drug couriers. That is, drug couriers do not necessarily match a specific “look” and those law enforcement agents that interdict based on a look (such as a person wearing specific types of clothing or wearing his clothes a specific way) are likely to be unsuccessful at identifying drug couriers. Drug couriers can come from a range of backgrounds and demographic groups (e.g., gender, race, age). Some couriers have significant levels of experience and have been trained to be a courier. Others, with minimal experience as a courier or with airports, may have been hired on short notice to deliver a bag containing drugs or money. Often times, they may not know what they are carrying.

Couriers may carry either drugs or money. This makes understanding source locations important to identifying an individual who may be a drug courier. A source location is an area where people often purchase drugs. For example, City A is a drug source location. People buy larger quantities of drugs in City A and then take them out of City A for resale. Therefore couriers will carry money into the area (i.e., on a flight into City A) and drugs out of the area (on a flight out of City A). While the possession of certain drugs is illegal, carrying money is not. Therefore, understanding source locations is important.

Interdiction at an Airport

Drug interdiction occurs in a variety of environments. For the purposes of this document, a drug interdiction involves a non-linear sequence of events by and between law enforcement and a suspected violator which can take a variety of forms. It ranges from covert or overt surveillance, to officers approaching a person to speak with him, up to a detention, and/or arrest. It can include uniformed or plain clothes police officers or a combination of both. The nature of the environment will influence the tactics that law enforcement uses to conduct the activity, constrained by law, while keeping the officers safe. In this document we are specifically focusing on the activities of officers working at airports which have both secured and unsecured environments. While officer safety tactics are always necessary the environment influences the level to which they are reasonable and legal.

Airports are significantly different from an urban street environment. Generally, most are not easily accessible by foot, they are often in remote locations, and most often people at airports are there for legal and acceptable purposes. Additionally, airports also tend to have TSA personnel who screen passengers and uniformed police and/or security personnel monitoring the environment. While there is a number of federal, state, and local authorities who operate in an airport environment, their roles, responsibilities, and authorities vary. The TSA, for example, is present in all airports but have a mandate to “Protect the Nation’s Transportation System”, but is not a law enforcement agency and does not have a law enforcement mandate. Outside the secured area there is still a risk that people that come to the airport to pick up, meet, follow, or escort a drug courier may be armed. but after a security checkpoint law enforcement is less likely to encounter an armed individual. Given this context, airports could be considered moderately secure environments.

Interdiction & Consensual Encounters

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with background on the legal constraints associated with airport interdiction, not a step-by-step guide to the legalities associated with different types of encounters with law enforcement. Understanding the legal constraints also provides context for the use of behavioral indicators to establish the constitutionality of an encounter or detention.

Law enforcement officers who interact with potential drug couriers are bound by federal, state, and local (municipal) law. An initial encounter with a suspected courier is often a consensual encounter. A consensual encounter is when a person is approached by law enforcement, but is free to leave at any point and would not be prevented from doing so. A consensual encounter only requires that law enforcement has a legal right to be in the location and the suspect is free to leave at any time. Ensuring people perceive that they are not being detained can be facilitated in a number of different ways, including limiting the number of law enforcement agents present and ensuring that an individual has avenues of exit during the encounter. Essentially, efforts need to be taken to ensure a person does not feel seized.

Case law and precedent controls the actions of law enforcement officials during a consensual encounter. In *United States v. Mendenhall* (1980), the Court defined what constitutes a seizure of a person under the Fourth Amendment. This is the seminal case in defining “consensual encounter” and introduced the concept of “Totality of Circumstances”. In this case the Court ruled that a person has been seized within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment only if, in view of all of the circumstances surrounding the incident, a reasonable person would have believed he was not free to leave. This means that if a reasonable person would believe that he was detained and there was not probable cause for the detention, it would be an unreasonable seizure and not a consensual encounter. Officers doing courier interdiction often work in plain clothes and in teams. This may be a factor in the context of a consensual encounter, where uniforms or large numbers of people may contribute to an individual’s perception that he cannot leave.

Although there are a number of cases that frame law enforcements authorities to engage with the public, there are three cases which are the foundation for the consensual encounter, of which Mendenhall

is one. After *Mendenhall*, in *United States v. Sokolow* (1989) and *Florida v. Bostick* (1991) the Court ruled that the totality of circumstances must be considered when determining reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion is defined as a quantum of knowledge sufficient to induce an ordinarily prudent and cautious person under these circumstances to believe criminal activity is at hand (Oolman, 2012). An interdiction which begins with a consensual encounter must include an articulation of all facts and circumstances related to the encounter. In sum, the totality of circumstances must be considered when utilizing behaviors (behavioral indicators) to establish reasonable suspicion and probable cause, so that one characteristic alone will not be grounds to search or make contact with an individual.

The totality of circumstances is the consideration of all extraneous factors used when making decisions. For instance, if a person made a last minute ticket purchase, and was late for his flight, and was sweating, this might be flagged as suspicious. However, if that person was also running to the terminal, then these circumstances might be considered reasonable behavior for someone about to miss his flight. The context of the behavior both in the physical environment of the airport and of the person must be viewed through this lens of the totality of circumstances.

Since one characteristic by itself is not indicative of criminal activity, a law enforcement official must observe other behaviors in order to develop reasonable suspicion. In other words, if an ordinary person, given the same knowledge, would believe that criminal activity was occurring, then it is considered reasonable suspicion. For example, if the person's ticket purchase is flagged as suspicious, these behaviors are not enough to detain the person. This is why the law enforcement official makes contact with the individual, so that he can observe the person's behavior during an interdiction. Depending on the individual and the questioning, he may exhibit verbal or nonverbal behaviors, which could be sufficient to give the official reasonable suspicion to detain.

It is important to note that the process of moving from the establishment of reasonable suspicion, based on the totality of the circumstances to that of probable cause and ultimately arrest is not linear. Rather, it requires a trained law enforcement officer to understand the total sum of the environment, the behavioral cues, and the individual context to determine the legal course of action.

Once a suspect is detained, he has legal rights such as the right to remain silent, and the right to counsel. At this point, an encounter with a courier proceeds as it would with any other individual suspected of a crime.

Identification of Couriers for Interdiction

Potential couriers are identified by law enforcement in a number of ways. The goal is to identify couriers, perform a consensual encounter, and attempt to determine if the individual is a drug courier. These individuals can be identified by their ticket characteristics, informants/intelligence, and also simply from observation or a cold stop without any background information. Through observing these characteristics, law enforcement is able to sift through the traveling public to identify persons of interest for further questioning.

BEHAVIORS

Couriers carrying illegal drugs or money are likely to act in a number of ways which might bring them to the attention of law enforcement. We have identified 7 categories of characteristics and behaviors (Table 1). The categorization of these behaviors is not prioritized and these categories are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive; rather they were categorized as a means of understanding and presenting the information.

Table 1. Characteristics & Behavioral Categories

Behavioral Indicators
Ticket Characteristics
Luggage Characteristics
General Behaviors
Deceptive Behaviors
Nonverbal Behaviors
Verbal Behaviors
Group Behaviors

Ticket Characteristics

Behaviors related to ticketing involve the process an individual goes through when buying the ticket and the nature of an individual's travel itinerary. Due to the timeline of drug transactions, flights and tickets often change when unexpected circumstances arise. This results in deviations from normal ticket purchasing behaviors and travel itineraries. These characteristics are described in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Ticket Characteristics

#	Behavior	Definition
Reservations		
1	Unusual Reservations	Reservations made at an unusual hour (such as 3:00 AM), often within 24 hours of the departure.
2	Purchased through Flagged Travel Agencies	Reservations made through travel agencies flagged by law enforcement for known ties with narcotics trafficking or traffickers. This could refer to those agencies that are not only flagged by informants or a formal intelligence report, but also through the prior experience of the officer.
3	Adding Passengers	Passengers added shortly before departure.
4	Changes in Itinerary	Frequent changes to a ticket shortly before departure, generally related to the time of the flight (later flights or a flight the next day) not the destination.

#	Behavior	Definition
5	Walk-Up Purchase	The courier buys the ticket at the ticket counter in the airport.
Payment		
6	Paid in Cash	The ticket is paid for in cash, typically with \$20 bills at the counter. \$20 bills are a common denomination used in drug transactions.
7	Paid with Prepaid Card	The ticket is paid for with a prepaid card. Prepaid Visas often have a \$500 limit and buying a one-way ticket typically falls under this \$500 limit.
8	Paid with Third-Party Credit Card	The ticket is paid for with a third-party credit card.
9	Exact Change	The ticket is paid for with the exact amount of money.
Ticket Peculiarities		
10	One-Way	One-way ticket is purchased. This may be a sign that the person does not know when he will return.
11	Fake Callback Numbers	The courier may provide inaccurate phone numbers on the purchase of tickets so he cannot be traced.
12	Missing Phone Numbers	The courier may fail to provide phone numbers on the reservations, especially with checked luggage.
13	Demand/Source Locations	The person is traveling to locations that are known for drug sales.
14	Missed Flights	Missing flights or not getting on connecting flights. A courier may pretend to travel to a location, but does not take the flight he is ticketed for and leaves the airport.
15	Same Reservations	People who are booked on the same reservation but try to appear separate.

Luggage Characteristics

The luggage that a courier uses to carry money or drugs and the way he acts in relation to this luggage is important. These characteristics are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Luggage Characteristics

#	Behavior	Definition
Bag Characteristics		
1	New Bags	The person uses brand new bags, often with the tags still on them. These bags are often purchased at mass retailers.
2	Specific Types of Locks	The bags are fastened with certain types of locks, often purchased at mass retailers, or the ones that come with those bags purchased at mass retailers.
3	Heavy Bags	The bags are almost too heavy to carry.
4	Suspicious Bulges	There are suspicious bulges in the back of the luggage.
5	Inappropriate Number of Bags	There are too many or too few bags in relation to the length of the trip.
6	Broken Handles or Wheels	The bag has broken handles or wheels, looks like it has been used frequently to carry heavy loads, or has been tampered with.
7	Bag Tampered With	Screws are missing or scuffed. Marks on screws suggest a person has taken the luggage apart, possibly to hide something inside it.
8	Use of Masking Agents	A bag may exude a pungent odor to mask the smell of concealed drugs or money. This could include strong perfumes, dryer sheets or other substances that exude a powerful smell.
Behaviors with Bags		
9	Guarding Luggage	When a courier is carrying a bag with valuable cargo he may act in ways which protect it and maintain it in his control. This could include sitting with the luggage between his knees or holding onto it tightly.
10	Failure to Pick up Luggage	When contraband is in a checked bag and a courier thinks he is being observed by law enforcement at baggage claim, he may either wait until the last minute to pick up his bag or even leave the bag behind so that he does not get caught in possession of contraband.
11	Unfamiliar With Bags	A courier may have only seen the bags with the drugs or money he is transporting on the day of travel. The person may not remember what the bags look like and may take extra time to claim them at baggage claim. He will often look at all of the bags, even when the bags look very different from one another.

#	Behavior	Definition
12	Luggage but No Passenger	A courier may check bags but he does not get on the plane.
13	Purchase Bags at Airport	The traveler purchases bags after arrival at airport. This could be an indicator that a person is carrying drugs attached to his person (called body packing) and after he goes through security he may buy a bag to put the drugs in so he does not have to carry it on his person.
14	Curbside Bag Drop	A courier may drop off bags at the curbside check in before entering the airport.
15	Dissociation at Drop Off	If a courier is dropped off at the airport by a driver, the courier and the driver may pointedly ignore or not engage with each other during the drop off. This includes the courier exiting the vehicle quickly and deliberately looking away from the driver as they separate.
16	Offload Verification	A courier may watch for his bag to be offloaded from the plane before leaving the terminal arrival area.

General Behaviors

General behaviors involve those common among couriers in the airport environment (Table 4). They are expressed for a variety of reasons in a multitude of circumstances.

Table 4. General Behaviors

#	Behavior	Definition
1	Late Arrival	A courier may arrive late either due to the erratic nature of drug transactions or to limit exposure to law enforcement personnel.
2	Traveling Alone	Single traveler.
3	Badge Stare	When approaching law enforcement or security personnel, a courier may fixate on the person's airport identification (airport badge), as he is trying to read the badge to determine which agency they are affiliated with and if they are a threat.
4	Talking on Phone	A courier may be constantly on the phone, receiving or providing status updates, making arrangements related to the deal, and getting/ giving directions.
5	Multiple Phones/SIM cards	A courier may carry multiple phones: one personal, others for work. He may also use a pay phone when he has cell phone in his possession. Couriers may also carry multiple SIM cards for their phones rather than multiple phones. This may be less obtrusive, but has the same goal; switching the card makes the phone appear as a different one electronically.

Deceptive Behaviors

Deceptive behaviors are those intended to conceal a person's true actions, intentions, or feelings. Couriers carry some form of contraband and they may exhibit a number of different behaviors to avoid being noticed or in an effort to deceive law enforcement or security personnel. Since the airport is an open space, couriers take extra precautions to avoid being seen as suspicious and try to blend in with their environment. In a sense, these deceptive behaviors (Table 5) are efforts to “look normal”. This includes dressing a certain way and disengaging from the public in order to avoid detection.

Table 5. Deceptive Behaviors

#	Behavior	Definition
1	Wandering Terminal	A courier may wander around the terminal rather than stay in one location. This may be an effort to disguise the destination of his flight from law enforcement or it may be the result of nervous energy.
2	Sitting at Wrong Gate	Some couriers are aware that law enforcement watches movement to and from certain source cities; therefore, they may wait at a different gate so as not to draw attention to themselves.
3	Sitting Down	A courier may not immediately leave the airport after he exits a plane, instead he may stop and sit down, possibly to identify if he is being followed. The more he believes he is followed, the longer he is likely to remain sitting.
4	No Eye Contact	A courier may avoid making eye contact with the people around him. This could include avoiding eye contact with airline personnel.
5	Suits that Don't Fit	Trying to blend in by wearing a suit, but it may be ill-fitting. This could also include a person that is wearing a suit but does not know how to wear it appropriately. For example, an individual will not take his jacket off when he sits down (and the jacket becomes wrinkled). This may be more pronounced at the international level if couriers are drawn from very economically disadvantaged locations.
6	Shoes Don't Match	When a courier is given a suit to help him to blend in, he may not be provided with shoes that match the suit. This may be more pronounced at the international level if couriers are drawn from very economically disadvantaged locations.

Nonverbal Behaviors

There are a number of nonverbal behaviors that come from both the stressful environment of an airport and contact with law enforcement. Once contacted by law enforcement, a courier may become

nervous and exhibit certain behaviors (Table 6). Generally, law enforcement is conducting surveillance of a person of interest prior to contact and is collecting information to establish a baseline for that person's behavior. After contact, based on his line of questioning, a trained interviewer may be able to adjust the level of tension during an interview resulting in an increase or decrease in frequency and intensity of stress related behaviors. The ability of a trained interviewer to manipulate behavior is true of deceptive and other behaviors as well.

Table 6 indicates whether or not behaviors are likely to occur before or after contact by law enforcement. These behaviors are described as pre-contact (when a person is under surveillance) or post-contact (during contact with law enforcement). Table 6 also incorporates the idea of a perceived stress point, when a courier may fear that he will be caught or identified as someone carrying drugs. This could include a security checkpoint or an encounter with law enforcement, or even when the courier is at the ticket counter.

Table 6. Nonverbal Behaviors

#	Behavior	Definition	Pre-Contact	Post-Contact
1	Evasive Eyes	A courier may look away when talking to law enforcement. Some may be aware that avoiding eye contact is a sign of deception and when being interviewed may instead look directly into law enforcement's eyes and not away.	Yes	Yes
2	Staring	At a stress point, a courier may simply stop and stare because he is trying to process what is happening. The person may give short answers and may seem to be "in a fog".	Yes	Yes
3	Scanning	A courier may be constantly moving his head and looking around to see who is nearby (such as law enforcement or other threats). This individual's head looks like it is "on a swivel". This may be a subconscious behavior or done intentionally. He may also be searching for checkpoint lines that move faster and/or seem more lax.	Yes	No
4	Watching Behind	A courier may be turning around and looking behind him when walking to ensure he is not being followed. This could be driven by fear or situational awareness, or both. This includes constantly looking around and watching people, looking at reflection off of windows, glossy surfaces on walls, or mirrors, to see who is around.	Yes	No
5	Folding arms	At a stress point, a courier may keep his arms folded.	No	Yes

#	Behavior	Definition	Pre-Contact	Post-Contact
6	Create Distance	At a stress point, a courier may put more distance between himself and the perceived threat.	Yes	No
7	Trembling	At a stress point, a courier may start shaking from a rapid increase in adrenalin in his system. This could include the shaking of a person's hand or other parts of the body.	Yes	Yes
8	Covering Mouth	At a stress point that requires talking, a courier may cover his mouth when he is making deceptive statements. This is done subconsciously "to cover his lies".	No	Yes
9	Licking of the Lips	A courier may repeatedly lick his lips during an interview with law enforcement. This is frequent and constant behavior.	No	Yes
10	Yawning	A courier may repeatedly yawn during an interview with law enforcement. This is a frequent and constant behavior.	No	Yes
11	Sweating	Courier may be sweating during an interview. If it worsens during the interview this shows that the person is nervous.	No	Yes
12	Lost Look	Some couriers are not experienced travelers and may appear to be unaware and unfamiliar with how to do things at an airport. This unfamiliarity may cause a courier to follow all directions very carefully as he travels through the airport or on and off the plane. He may also very deliberately do all things he is directed to do by airport or airline staff when more seasoned travelers may not.	Yes	No
13	Fidgeting	A courier may be playing with objects on his person or other objects when he is sitting down (e.g., someone who is toying with his jewelry). This could be a nervous reaction. This is a frequent and constant behavior.	Yes	Yes
14	Inappropriate Smiling or Laughing	At a stress point, a courier may smile or laugh inappropriately.	No	Yes
15	Carotid Artery Pulse	At a stress point, a courier's neck artery may visibly pulse from a rapid increase in adrenalin in his system and increased blood flow.	Yes	Yes

#	Behavior	Definition	Pre-Contact	Post-Contact
16	Irregular Breathing	At a stress point, a courier may breathe irregularly, similar to someone who is about to hyperventilate. May also involve one deep breath and a few short ones. This could also be an unconscious holding of breath to control non-verbal cues.	Yes	Yes

The ability of a trained law enforcement officer (LEO) to manipulate these behaviors is important. For example, when asked for his identification (ID) by law enforcement, a person may tremble to the point it may distract him from finding his ID. This can be so pronounced that it looks like a seizure. The LEO can then use different lines of questioning to make that individual tremble more and/or less, to establish if his behavior is baseline nervousness or if he has something to hide. In the case of a stress point, such as a TSA checkpoint, this same trembling may subside after the courier gets through a checkpoint.

Verbal Behaviors

In addition to nonverbal behaviors, there are several verbal behaviors that occur during an interview (Table 7). Verbal behavior may also be manipulated by a trained interviewer.

Table 7. Verbal Behaviors

#	Behavior	Definition
1	Shaky Voice	While being interviewed by law enforcement, a courier has a wavering or shaky voice due to nervousness.
2	Voice Cracks	While being interviewed by law enforcement, a courier's voice may crack due to nervousness.
3	Can't Answer a Question	While being interviewed by law enforcement, a courier may be unable or reluctant to answer a question that the individual should have an answer to, like not knowing his zodiac sign or age. He may also be reluctant to answer whether or not he is carrying drugs or money. This could involve someone not providing the same answer as he did to the same question earlier in that conversation.
4	Deflection	While being interviewed by law enforcement the courier attempts to avoid or adjust the questions he is being asked or tries to buy time to think of a deceptive response. It can involve a number of behaviors outlined below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeating questions back to the interviewer. 2. Answers question with a question. 3. Answers with unrelated information. 4. When asked to search his bag, will dump it on the ground or help the officer search the bag. This is done to keep the officer from searching his person.
5	Deep Sighing	A deep sigh by a courier may indicate a number of emotions ranging from a person who is about to confess or tell the truth, or a sign of relief or he is getting annoyed, or tired of telling his story and wants the encounter to be over.

#	Behavior	Definition
6	Specific Responses	<p>Certain responses to a line of questioning during an interview by law enforcement might indicate someone is lying. These responses include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "To tell you the truth" 2. "I would not lie to you" 3. "I swear" 4. "Honestly" 5. "You have to believe me" 6. "I have no reason to lie to you"

Group Behavior

A drug courier may not necessarily travel alone. He may knowingly work with another individual to facilitate the smooth transport of drugs or money. A courier may also be observed by another to ensure the courier makes the delivery. While couriers may be working as a team, they may not necessarily sit together on the plane, walk with one another, or even speak to one another. This is to keep both individuals from getting detained or arrested if one or the other is stopped by law enforcement. Outside of direct contact, couriers traveling together may exhibit a number of behaviors which allow them to communicate covertly and evade detection (Table 8).

Table 8. Group Behaviors

#	Behavior	Definition
1	Acknowledgement Glance	Often when exiting the airplane, one member of the group may consciously look for the other individual to confirm he is there. This is a quick glance to acknowledge that he has seen the person he is traveling with.
2	Disengagement	After the acknowledgement, the leading person does not consciously make contact with his co-traveler again. He often walks away from the other person so that he can follow at a distance.
3	Verification	A very short involuntary glance to ensure that the person is still following behind him.
4	Covert Looks	Using the natural environment to verify someone is there. It often involves a "stare like" look of a longer duration and intensity than an acknowledgement glance. It may involve making turns and when possible looking over his shoulder at the person following. This could also involve looking at reflections instead of looking directly at the other person.

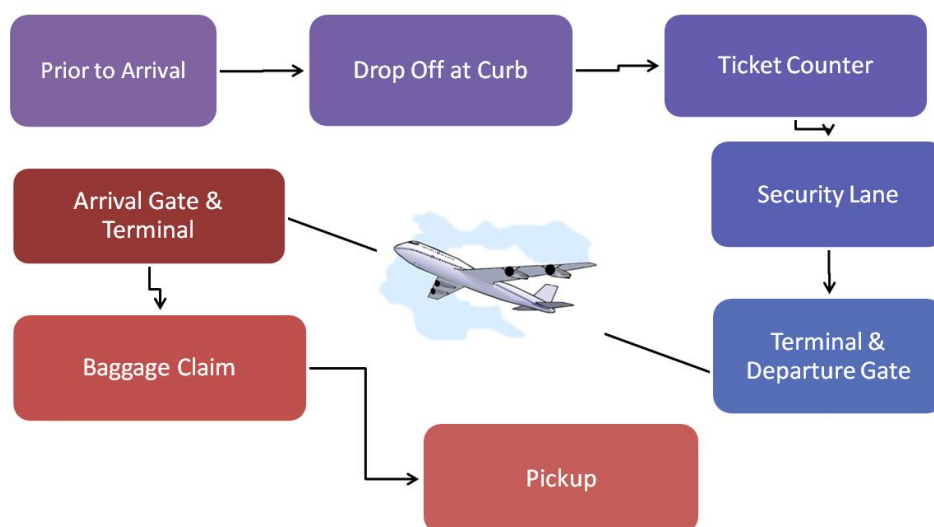
#	Behavior	Definition
5	Snaking	One person follows the other at a distance while they weave through the airport, often towards the baggage claim. They usually never acknowledge each other, but they mimic movements. When moving, the person in front may appear to be walking slightly slower than the crowd. This is to ensure the person following him does not lose sight of him.
6	Same Bag	Two couriers who are trying to avoid looking like they are together may be carrying the same bag, because the bags were bought in quantity by the supplier for use in transporting drugs.

Couriers that are working together may cycle through these behaviors as they move through an airport. For example, a courier may acknowledge his partner, disengage, then acknowledge again, then disengage. There are three different types of looks between group members and the primary means through which they can be differentiated is duration; verification looks are extremely short, the acknowledgement glance is somewhat longer, and covert looks are the longest in duration.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Utilizing behavioral indicators to identify drug or money couriers requires a familiarity with the environmental baseline of a location. The environmental context matters as a means to understand why and when certain behaviors are relevant and likely to occur, and what behaviors are valid indicators of illicit activity and what behaviors are innocuous. As such we have identified the steps, or different operating environments, involved in traveling through the airport (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Sequence of Events of Traveling Through the Airport



As Figure 1 indicates there are generally eight different “operational” environments when traveling by air. In the case of an individual with a layover, this would include more time within the arrival terminal and make the sequence of events more cyclical. These different “events” are described in greater detail in Appendix A: Chain of Event Descriptions. We are including Figure 1 and Appendix A to help the reader understand how certain behaviors associated with drug couriers deviates from the environmental baseline, which allows law enforcement to identify those individuals. This is not meant to be a comprehensive discussion of what people do at airports; rather the goal is to provide a means of understanding the baseline from which identified behaviors deviate.

Human behavior is likely to change based upon the perceived environment of an individual and different environments are likely to influence different behaviors. Furthermore, specific behaviors related to a drug courier are relevant to different stages of an airport environment. It is also important to note that some behaviors are only relevant during a consensual encounter or interdiction by law enforcement. For example, it is upon interdiction that most verbal and nonverbal behaviors become relevant. Figure 1 can also be used to better understand the stress point, which is a place or interaction that is likely to cause a fear of apprehension by the courier. For example, the operational environment of the security checkpoint would be considered a stress point for a drug courier. It is a logical location where a courier would be concerned about being identified and arrested as a result of the search and short interview by security personnel.

For trained law enforcement personnel to utilize behavioral indicators to identify drug couriers requires an understanding of a person’s behaviors in the context of his environment. Without understanding this environmental baseline, any one behavior, or group of behaviors, is of limited utility to identify a drug courier.

RELATED FINDINGS

The INIA identified a number of areas of potential relevance to other ongoing AMX projects which are also related to understanding the use of behavioral indicators to identify persons involved in the transport of illegal drugs or narcotics through airports.

Cultural Differences

Narcotics smuggling can occur in airports throughout the United States and the world. People of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds are likely to be engaged as couriers. It is therefore important to identify the extent that cultural variation will affect behavior. INIA trainers indicate that though most non-verbal behaviors are universal and consistent across all cultures, there is some variation in verbal behaviors. Although it is beyond the scope of this document to identify all the cultural variations in behavior, an example of cultural variation is that of financial institutions. In many developing countries there is distrust in financial institutions, this causes people to carry large amounts of currency.

The Broker

A broker is another individual involved in the illegal narcotics trade. A broker can be involved in the drug transactions by setting up and potentially attending meetings between suppliers and dealers. He is generally not carrying drugs or money and may not be involved in the actual transaction. The broker may exhibit some characteristics associated with a drug courier but not to the same degree, as he does not typically carry drugs or drug proceeds.

CONCLUSIONS

Airports will continue to serve as a means of transporting illegal drugs and associated money. Behavioral characteristics can be used as a means of identifying the drug courier, but the utilization of behavioral cues requires an understanding of the baseline behaviors in an environment and an understanding of an individual's baseline behavior. With this knowledge, generally developed through training and experience, it is possible to identify couriers.

The behaviors identified in this report also provide us an opportunity to better understand how an individual acts when attempting to avoid notice or to deceive those around him. This level of understanding provides us the potential to transfer these behaviors to other settings and assess their applicability to other types of criminal behavior. Future research in this area may also benefit from a greater understanding of the cultural differences in verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Furthermore, it is important to realize that cultural variation does exist and, therefore, makes it essential to have a proper understanding of operating environments and baseline behaviors.

To fully utilize these behavioral indicators and determine their utility to both law enforcement and other contexts requires a systematic assessment. This is necessary to determine the extent that persons carrying illegal drugs exhibit these types of behaviors and to the extent it is possible for trained law enforcement to identify them. With an assessment it is then possible to develop more efficient and effective means of assisting identifying and safely interdicting with drug couriers. Ideally, this enhanced capacity will serve as a means of reducing crime while keeping officers and the traveling public safe.

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Appendix A: Chain of Event Descriptions

Event	Description
Prior to Arrival	Most passengers book flights and purchase their tickets in advance of arriving at the airport. Such tickets cost less, and buying prior to arrival allows the passenger to make his own flight arrangements. The traveler must pack for the trip and decide how much luggage he will bring. Also, he must decide whether he wants to carry on bags or check his luggage at the terminal.
Drop Off at Curb	During drop off, a passenger may have another person drop him off at the curb to avoid paying for parking and to save time. In other circumstances, the individual may park or use public transportation to get to the airport. In some airports, a traveler may have the opportunity to check his bags at the curb rather than inside the airport.
Ticket Counter	The ticket counter is where a person checks in for his flight and also where last minute purchases or changes to his flight can be made. This is also where people can check their bags through to their destination.
Security Lane	The security lane is where TSA scans carry-on luggage to ensure that no weapons, prohibited items, or other dangerous substances make it on board the planes. This also involves the traveler passing through a metal detector or some other imaging device to ensure he is not carrying any weapons.
Terminal & Departure Gate	Once the passenger makes it through security he is in the airport terminal and generally proceeds to his departure gate. He may visit terminal retail stores, walk around the terminal, or go directly to the gate for his flight. He often has things to do to occupy himself, such as reading a book, using electronic devices, or using his cell phone.
Arrival Gate & Terminal	Once the passenger has arrived into the arrival gate, cell phones are often used to call or text family and friends to inform them of his landing. If he is meeting someone to pick him up, he will likely contact that individual to let him know he has landed. If passengers are traveling with others, they will likely exit together, or wait in the gate area outside until the group exits the plane. A person who has a connecting flight may spend time in the terminal or move to his next departure gate.
Baggage Claim	Baggage claim is where passengers' checked luggage will be returned from the plane and retrieved by the passengers. Due to the large volume of baggage, this step typically involves waiting for the passengers' bags to be unloaded from the plane, transported to baggage claim, and then placed on the belt. Passengers look for their baggage on the belt, retrieve it, and then exit the airport.
Pickup	Some passengers arriving at a destination may rent a car or arrange for transportation by public transit or through a personal contact. Other passengers may be arriving home and already have a means of transport arranged. Passengers may wait at the curb for rides if a friend or family member is picking them up. If the passenger rented a car, he will likely go to the rental car services located at the airport to pick up a car.